

Spesutie Island Boating Operation holds Safety Expo

Story by
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APG News

The Spesutie Island Boating Operation held its annual Safety Expo May 20 on Aberdeen’s waterfront.

“The event was not only for those who own boats or SIBO members,” said Tim Sprucebank, SIBO activities director. “It was for anyone who wanted to come.”

Dean Hanson, commodore of the club, said not only club members were learning about the equipment. Children and moms were also shooting off flares and learning how to use safety equipment.

“It was great to see families getting involved,” Hanson said.

The event was the first organized safety expo SIBO has had, Sprucebank said.

Sprucebank and Jerry Uber, a lieutenant of Main Line Sail and Power Squadron, led demonstrations on how to use the safety equipment.

Uber selected equipment for the demonstrations that “many people have but not many people use so that they don’t use equipment for the first time during an emergency,” Sprucebank said.

“Reading directions on how to properly use your safety equipment during an actual emergency is not the best time,” he said. “Therefore, attending an event like this could save a life in an actual emergency and you already know how to properly use the equipment.”

Sprucebank and Uber demonstrated how to ignite handheld and aerial flares. Then attendees practiced lighting the expired flares.

Boaters must remove the flare’s cap and strike it off of a surface to light them, Uber said.

“It’s not an easy thing to do,” Uber said. “Sometimes it takes people four or five times to light the flares.”

The safety expo is the best time to practice using flares because one must get approval to do so any other time, he said.

He said a lot of people aren’t aware that flares have an expiration date on them. They expire 42 months from the date of manufacture. This is stamped on the side of the flare.

“It was [interesting] to see how many [were] duds and which brands lasted longer,” Hanson said.

Uber said boaters don’t have to throw flares away because they can still be used for back-ups. When boaters want to dispose of expired flares they should give them to the Coast Guard or Main Line Power Squadron so that they can be used in demonstrations.

Attendees also learned the different uses of personal floatation devices. The Type I PFD is a jacket to be used offshore, Uber said. Type II



Photo by DEAN HANSON, ECBC
A frogman from the U.S. Coastguard jumps from a helicopter during a search and rescue demonstration at Spesutie Island Boating Operation’s Safety Expo May 20.

is a near-shore jacket which is used for lakes and rivers. Jet skiers use the Type III ski vest. Type IV is a ring boaters throw to rescue or retrieve people in the water and Type V is a special use device and is auto-inflatable.

“The newer auto-inflatable life preserver can be pricy but what price can you put on your life?” Uber said.

Nathan Abbott, a 12-year-old from Northeast Middle School, tried on an auto-inflatable vest and jumped into the water to show the audience how it worked.

“It was good to see how quickly the vests inflated so if you ever had to use them you wouldn’t panic,” said Tom Haug, fleet captain of the club.

Another demonstration Sprucebank and Uber gave was the heaving line. Sprucebank said this involves throwing a 100-foot-long rope attached to a monkey fist, a softball wrapped in nylon. He said this method can be beneficial for rescuing people who are farther away from the boat because boaters can throw the line 50 to 60 yards.

Uber said attendees participated in a contest to see who could throw the line into a life preserver ring. The first two people who were able to do the task won two new free adult-sized life vests.

Ryan Curley, a 16-year-old from Northeast High School who attended the event, said the contest was his favorite part about the expo.

“It looks easy but it’s not,” Curley said. “It took everyone five tries to get it in.”

The Coast Guard Auxiliary and Main Line Sail and Power Squadron provided free vessel

safety checks to make sure the boats complied with state and federal regulations. Some of the items checked were the boat’s horns, navigation lights and ventilation, according to a check list on the Vessel Safety Check Web site.

Uber said whether the boats pass or fail the inspection, boaters can take the inspection form to West Marine in Northeast and Havre de Grace to get a 10 percent discount on equipment.

A highlight of the safety expo was when the U.S. Coast Guard helicopter based out of Atlantic City arrived, Uber said. Coast Guard members performed a search and rescue demonstration where they dropped one of their frogmen into the water and retrieved him to simulate a water rescue. This event was prearranged and the Coast Guard was given the latitude and longitude of the SIBO’s location at APG, Uber said.

“It was very fascinating to watch,” Haug said.

“We were most appreciative of this professional display of piloting and seamanship,” Uber said.

In addition to demonstrations, expo attendees viewed APG Fire Department and U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center boat displays.

Sprucebank said about 40 people attended the safety day.

Uber and officers of SIBO hope to get a better turnout of people next year.

“It’s a shame more people didn’t get to see it,” Uber said. “It was a bit windy but you couldn’t ask for a better day.”

Uber said he always tells people “Safety is not an option; it’s a requirement.”

Boating safety tips

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Coast Guard

U.S. Coast Guard reports show that 676 people died from boating incidents in 2004, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Out of the 484 who drowned, 90 percent of them weren’t wearing life jackets.

In addition to wearing life jackets, there are other steps boaters can take to prevent boating injuries and deaths:

- Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages while boating.

Drinking alcohol affects the vision, coordination, decision making, and balance needed to maneuver a boat. Reports imply that alcohol was a factor in one-third of boating deaths.

- Complete a boating education course.

Lack of attention, carelessness, inexperience and unsafe speeds are initial causes of accidents.

The course teaches boaters rules and laws of operating a boat.

Seventy percent of boating deaths happened on boats where the operator had not taken a boating education course.

- Participate in the Vessel Safety Check Program.

The Vessel Safety Check Program is free and offered by U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadron volunteer organizations. Volunteers inspect safety equipment, give boaters information about safety procedures and explain how the equipment is used. For more information on the program, visit www.vesselsafety-check.org.

- Be aware of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

All engines give off carbon monoxide. At first, the symptoms of CO can feel like those of seasickness. It only takes a few minutes for victims to die from the deadly gas. Possible exposure to CO includes floating or swimming near an inactive engine, using a motor generator to power air conditioning and operating “any gasoline-powered engine while docked and/or rafted with other boats operating engines and being in motion without the proper cabin ventilation. To avoid the poisonous gas, make sure all equipment is operating properly and use CO detectors.



Your health is KUSAHC’s goal



Military health system transforming to address new challenges

Story by
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The Defense Department’s Military Health System must transform to continue its commitment to protecting the health of its service members and other beneficiaries, a top DoD official told Congressmen March 29.

The armed forces have more than 275,000 service members in Afghanistan, Iraq and other areas around the world, said David S. C. Chu, undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, March 28 in prepared remarks before the House Armed Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

“The department is firmly committed to protecting the health of these and all service members before, during and after their deployment and [of] our other healthcare beneficiaries, who now number 9 million,” he said.

Several changes in the military

health system will make achieving this goal possible, he said. One of the biggest will address the rising costs of health care.

The military health system has essentially doubled in size in the past five years from about \$19 billion in 2001 to \$38 billion this year, he said. Officials estimate expenditures could reach \$64 billion by 2015, he added.

“This rapid growth in cost clearly puts the sustainability of our health benefit at risk,” Chu said. “The facts show that the expansion of TRICARE, high health inflation, the reduction in beneficiary cost shares, and sharp increase of usage by our retirees under 65 is responsible for this growth.”

Beneficiaries paid 27 percent of total health costs in 1995. Today they pay only 12 percent. The DoD proposes to bring this into better balance by increasing cost sharing for retirees under 65. After a two-year transition, beginning in fiscal 2009, these premium and co-pay increases would

match the average percentage increase of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program, he said.

Additionally, the department is proposing changes to pharmacy co-payments for all beneficiaries except active-duty members. These changes would encourage use of mail order and military treatment facility pharmacy refills and generic products.

“We also ask that Congress clarify to those who oppose the department our legal authority to obtain federal pricing discounts for prescriptions obtained at retail pharmacies,” he said.

The department expects to save about \$735 million in fiscal 2007, if both premium and deductible changes as well as pharmacy program adjustments are implemented, he said. Between fiscal 2007 and 2011, expected savings will total \$11.2 billion.

DoD also has addressed internal efficiencies.

“We have implemented a number of actions in the last several years

designed to slow health care cost,” he said.

A partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs and obtaining federal pricing for mail order and pharmacy services have contributed to this, Chu said. Consolidation of TRICARE contracts, regions and contractors also has led to significant administrative savings.

New healthcare contracts use best-practice principles to enhance quality of care, emphasize patient safety, improve beneficiary satisfaction, and control private-sector costs, he said.

However, Congress-imposed restrictions on funding adversely affect military treatment facilities as well as private-sector care, he said.

“We need the flexibility to move funds between direct-care and private-sector care,” Chu said. This would allow DoD to set military treatment facilities’ budgets based on workload output, not staff numbers, supply costs and other materials, he added.

DoD’s medical health system also is revamping its infrastructure. Medical centers in the national capital area and San Antonio will be consolidated, he said. By contrast, some areas, such as Fort Belvoir, Va., will see significant enhancements.

“Another substantial change to the [military health system] infrastructure is the development of joint facilities as a result of increased collaboration with the VA,” Chu said. “The most visible example today is at Naval Hospital Great Lakes.”

There, an aging, oversized hospital is being replaced with a new outpatient facility at North Chicago VA Medical Center, he said.

Looking to the future, Chu said, DoD will adapt to new challenges by building on today’s achievements.

“The transformation process is designed to provide the armed forces with world-class operational-medicine capabilities while delivering the outstanding TRICARE benefit to our beneficiaries,” he said.

Memorial day

From front page

said, “especially in light of the draw-down of Soldiers due to the Base Realignment and Closure.”

The past commander of Post 17 and coordinator of the Memorial Day observance for the past 10 years, Bob Dorsey, thanked all who supported the program, particularly Aberdeen Boy Scout Troop 802, the Warrior Brotherhood Veterans, U.S. military veterans motorcycle clubs and commander-elect of VFW Post 5337, Bob Gehr.

Dorsey thanked the Warrior Brotherhood President John Bloss who led the contingent of more than 20 Vietnam, Desert Storm and Korean War veterans.

“This ceremony has absolutely taken on more meaning since the start of the Iraq War,” Dorsey said, adding, “I’m very proud of the veterans who take time out to honor fellow veterans for their ultimate sacrifice. Passing on this tradition to the young

and to our community will ensure meaningful Memorial Day programs for many years to come.”

Rita Leno, the grandmother of two junior auxiliary members who assisted with the Wreath Laying ceremony, agreed.

“It’s important to teach them about our country and our Soldiers,” Leno said of her granddaughters Lauren Watson, 10, and Jewel Watson, 8.

Lauren Watson said she enjoyed participating.

“It reminds us about people who died for our country,” she said.

Boy Scout Dru Inman, 11, who participated in the ceremony along with his brother, future Cub Scout Dreyk Inman, 5, said that it felt “pretty good,” to be involved.

“This is all in keeping with the tradition of the Boy Scouts,” he said.

The Inmans are the sons of Staff Sgt. Timothy Inman, the APG Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

Memorial Day

www.usmemorialday.org

Originally known as Decoration Day, Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for those who died in the service of the nation. While President Lyndon Johnson officially declared Waterloo, N.Y., the birthplace of Memorial Day in 1966, the holiday’s origin is difficult to prove conclusively. There is evidence that organized women’s groups in the south were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War.

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868, by Gen. John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in General Order No. 11, and was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate Soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

New York was the first state to officially recognize the holiday in 1873 and by 1890 it was recognized by all northern states. The south honored their dead on separate days until after World War I when the holiday changed from

honoring those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring American service members who died in any war.

Passed by Congress with the National Holiday Act of 1971, Public Law 90-363, Memorial Day is now celebrated in almost every state on the last Monday in May. In addition, several southern states have additional days for honoring Confederate war dead; Jan. 19 in Texas; April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi; May 10 in South Carolina; and June 3 in Louisiana and Tennessee.

Moment of remembrance

To help re-educate and remind Americans of the true meaning of Memorial Day, the “National Moment of Remembrance” resolution was passed in December 2000. The resolution asks that at 3 p.m. local time, for all Americans to “voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of Remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to “Taps.”